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ABSTRACT

A survey elicited workers' opinions in five areas: (1) essential skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed on the job by entry-level workers; (2) the purposes, content, and delivery of training needed and desired by workers; (3) productivity; (4) workplace environment; and (5) employee benefits. Information was gathered through written surveys of randomly selected workers and companies in Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. A total of 9,328 workers in 1,342 companies were sampled; 1,857 workers in 468 companies responded. Of the respondents, 61 percent were female, 65 percent were white, and 17 percent Asian/Pacific Islander. Workers averaged 2-5 years in their jobs; 62 percent earned \$3.85-7.99 per hour, and 24 percent earned \$8.00 or more per hour. Some of the findings, organized in the five areas studied, are as follows: (1) entry-level workers agreed with employers on important skills and attitudes, and 90 percent of those surveyed said these skills and attitudes were already present; (2) drugs and alcohol were seen as problems; (3) 78 percent of the workers desire more training; (4) more than 75 percent of the workers had made suggestions to improve productivity; (5) 85 percent of the workers liked their work environment, although many thought they were not paid fairly; and (6) many workers lack benefits. Policy implications to be studied include increased training, the problems of illiterate workers, and needs for benefits and dependent care. (The survey form and 29 references are included.) (KC)

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Northwest Entry-Level Worker Study

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Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Who are the Entry-Level Workers?	2
A Changing Workplace Creates New Demands on Workers and Employers	3
Employer Views Regarding Skills Needed	4
Background and Audience for this Study	5
Purposes and Rationale	5
Methodology	9
Study Findings	11
Population Description	11
Workplace Skills	14
Workplace Environment	14
Training	15
Workplace Improvements	16
Worker Benefits	17
Summary and Conclusions	18
Policy Implications	20
References	24
Appendix: Survey Tabulation	26

INTRODUCTION

A survey by Louis Harris and Associates for the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy entitled *Redesigning America's Schools: The Public Speaks* concluded:

It is clear ...that the American people and business leaders are both convinced that the way for this country to become competitive with foreign business, especially the Japanese, is not....to compete with unskilled and low skilled labor. But instead, they believe, the U.S. should face up to exporting or automating such lower skill jobs and production activities and turn to creating whole new opportunities on a base of a labor pool that is far more sophisticated and far better trained to perform those highly skilled tasks that would once again make the U.S. competitive in the world (Harris, 1986).

The workplace continues to undergo a period of rapid change. An increasing number of entry-level jobs requires proficiency in the basic skills i.e., reading, writing and computing as well as in the new basics--teamwork, adaptability, problem solving, and computer literacy. Just at the time when employers are seeking highly qualified entry-level workers, demographic and social changes have left us with a shortage of work ready applicants. Employers are recruiting new hires from workers they would not have considered for an interview a few years ago.

This population includes significant numbers of workers entering the workforce with less than a high school education—poorly motivated or disadvantaged youth, limited English speaking immigrants, and dislocated workers. For many, their success in finding work and remaining employed is further complicated by their responsibilities for children and other dependents. Although the lack of employability skills presents a great challenge to the workplace, some employers are responding with innovative education and training programs and personnel policies that enable workers to upgrade their skills and to manage successfully work and family responsibilities. These programs may make the difference between success and failure for those who lack access to education and to family support systems.

Public policy makers are concerned about scenarios that have been described as "mismatches between workforce needs and workplace capabilities, the growth of an underclass of long-term unemployed and losses in productivity and world competitiveness" (National Alliance of Business, 1986). These public leaders recognize that our education, social welfare and economic goals must be integrated. They recognize that:

- investment in education and training is an economic development strategy as critical as job creation or retention strategies
- the new welfare programs designed to move clients successfully into the world of work depend on a workplace that accommodates the needs of families
- those preparing youth and adults for the world of work need to stay attuned to the changing needs of employers and the workplace.

In his report *The New American Worker*, Cole (1989) states:

The 'New American Worker' is really two people. The first is a worker who has the knowledge, skills and attitudes to successfully function as a member of a team and who interacts with everchanging technology in a decentralized and flexible *production* environment. The second is the student who functions as a member of a team and who interacts with everchanging technology in a decentralized and flexible *learning* environment. The characteristics of the new American worker and the new American student are merging into one and the same. That is the lesson American corporations are quickly learning and restructuring to accommodate. (p. 24)

Other policy makers are concerned about reliance on the 'skills mismatch' approach and put greater emphasis on the need for job development. In the opinion of the Economic Policy Institute:

The point of improving workforce skills should not be to 'match' the skills required for an improbable future explosion of professional/technical and other high-skill jobs, but rather to provide a solid base of workforce quality upon which high performance work reorganization can be pursued... Far from producing more college graduates, the bigger and more important challenge is to improve the jobs, pay, and skills of the noncollege-educated workforce... Approached in this way, broad upgrading of worker skills, coupled with policies that encourage employers to utilize a higher skilled, more empowered workforce, can become a constituent part of a policy mix favoring a "high skill path" for the U.S. economy as a whole (Mishel and Teixeira, 1991, pg. 3).

Who are Entry-Level Workers?

Who are entry-level workers? This investigation defines entry-level workers as those in a position which requires no more than a high school education. For some, these positions are chosen as short-term opportunities, or as the beginning of a career path. We are particularly concerned with those who are considered "at risk" of failure in the workplace due to lack of education, employability skills, or family support. This population includes undereducated and poorly motivated youth, low income minority workers, dislocated workers, single women with children who are leaving welfare dependency, and limited English speaking immigrants.

Demographics

If we examine demographic projections provided by the Hudson Institute for the year 2000 and beyond provided by the Hudson Institute, we see that labor shortages are likely to worsen rather than improve. These trends are already evident in the Northwest. In the interviews conducted for this study in 1989, most employers reported experiencing shortages in numbers of qualified applicants for entry-level positions. This shortage is of great concern to the business community.

The changing characteristics of our work force have been well documented in recent reports such as *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century* (Johnson and Packer, 1987). Our workforce is aging and will include proportionately more limited English speakers, more workers with young and elderly dependents and more educationally disadvantaged. The workforce will grow

slowly, becoming older, more female, and more disadvantaged. This study found that the projections identifying more women, minorities and new immigrants in the workforce are already reflected in the current workforce at the entry-level. Some of the special needs of these groups present challenges to productivity in the workforce. It is critical that these needs be recognized and addressed by schools and employers to better prepare entry-level workers.

- Working women with dependents, particularly small children face unique problems. In 1987, 65 percent of mothers with children 18 and under were employed, including 57 percent of the mothers of pre-school children. The fastest growing segment of the labor force is mothers with children under three. Estimates show that one of every four workers is dealing with child care issues. At the same time, the fastest growing cohort of the population is aged 75 and older. Many analysts feel that elder care issues will soon be common for many workers. This demographic change is particularly significant to the entry-level worker issue. Findings from this study show that entry level salaries cannot support child care expenses, and many entry-level jobs are part-time and do not provide health care or other benefits that are critical to family well being. Many employers recognized that child care has become a company issue.
- *Workforce 2000* reports that immigrants will represent the largest share of the increase in the population and the workforce since the first World War, especially in the South and the West. Many employers we interviewed reported hiring new immigrants. However, they also reported that language barriers often made communication difficult and impeded advancement opportunities.
- Demographics indicate a growing imbalance in terms of concentrations of minority and disadvantaged populations in lower paying fields. Such a continued trend will reinforce a growing underclass of unmotivated and disenfranchised adults. The growing trend toward higher educational requirements and an increase in numbers of minorities and other disadvantaged groups who lack education and training can lead to a crisis for these groups in terms of lost human potential, equal access to higher wage occupations and lack of work and class mobility.

A Changing Workplace Creates New Demands on Workers and Employers

"By the end of the century, an estimated 5 to 15 million manufacturing jobs will be restructured. An equal number of service jobs will probably be obsolete" (National Alliance of Business, 1986). The National Resource of Business estimates that of the 16 million new jobs created by 1995, 90 percent will be in the service sector. At the same time, the nature of work has changed. Most jobs now require some type of post high school training and increasingly employers are referring to problem solving, adaptability, teamwork, and familiarity with technology as "basic skills."

Workplace requirements are also undergoing a period of rapid change. Both the types of jobs and the entry level skills required are fundamentally different than they were just a few years ago. Even the most basic information age jobs require technological literacy and critical thinking skills. *Building a Quality Workforce* (Department of Labor, 1988), uses the positions of bank clerk and insurance claims adjuster to demonstrate the changes in two types of positions traditionally held by those with a high school or less education. "These jobs are completely revamped, requiring less rote

activity, dealing with less standardized requests, and demanding more ability to analyze problems, work with excessive or incomplete information, ask pertinent questions, identify sources of information, and penetrate poor documentation" (p.11).

Workers' expectations of what happens in the workplace have also evolved. They rely on the workplace for many social benefits and protections which are offered through government mandate in other countries: health care for themselves and their dependents, security in old age through pensions, paid vacations and sick leave, to name a few. Most recently, some employers are beginning to provide assistance for child care and elder care and instruction in basic skills, such as reading and writing, and in developing teamwork and problem solving skills. Employers see many of these benefits as particularly important in attracting and retaining qualified entry-level workers, who are a decreasing population because of demographic changes.

Employer Views Regarding Skills Needed

In 1989 NWREL surveyed 58 Northwest and Pacific companies representing construction, manufacturing, retail, trade, health, public utilities, child care, financial and insurance industries, local state and federal government, and food and hospitality industries to determine the perceived skills needed by today's workforce. Companies identified as innovative in their approach to entry-level workers were nominated and then selected to participate. (Owens, Lindner, and Cohen, 1989). Although the sample was not representative, employers' concerns clearly reflect a trend: a growing gap between the level of basic skills needed by employers and those available in the applicant pool.

Employers' concerns were in four basic areas: basic skills, new basic skills, employability skills, and attitude and motivation. Employers mentioned serious deficiencies in the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and communication. They also were concerned about the lack of new basic skills—critical thinking, problem solving, ability to work in teams or as a group, and flexibility. Entry-level workers were not perceived as having strong employability skills such as presentation for interviews, filling out applications, and ability to communicate their strengths effectively. Nearly every employer interviewed felt concern about worker attitude and motivation. They felt employees lacked an appropriate work ethic that motivates workers to take responsibility for their work products. Employers felt that employees often didn't understand the expectations of the workplace such as good attendance, respecting supervisors, putting in a full days' work, and wearing appropriate attire.

Employers in the Northwest and Pacific identified necessary skills similar to those identified recently at the national level by The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). This Department of Labor commission recognizes five competency areas and three foundation areas as important for positions in high performance workplaces.

Competencies--effective workers can productively use:

- **Resources**--allocating time, money, materials, space, and staff;
- **Interpersonal Skills**--working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds;

- **Information**--acquiring and evaluating data, organizing and maintaining files, interpreting and communicating, and using computers to process information;
- **Systems**--understanding social, organizational, and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, and designing or improving systems;
- **Technology**--selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and troubleshooting technologies.

The Foundation--competence requires:

- **Basic Skills**--Reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking, and listening;
- **Thinking Skills**--thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning;
- **Personal Qualities**--individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.

Background and Audience for this Study

Background

In the past five years, there have been numerous studies of employers regarding their perceptions of changes occurring in the workforce and the shortage they see of qualified workers. Much has also been written on the training needs of today's workforce as perceived by employers. Our 1989 study, described on page 4, focused on employers' views (also refer to bibliography). This study, in comparison, focuses on the views of the entry-level workers themselves regarding the characteristics of today's workforce, their perceived training needs, the degree of relevance of their high school training, ways to improve the quality of the workplace, and their assessment of the relative importance of various worker benefits currently existing or being considered by various companies and legislators.

The present NWREL study focused on the attitudes and opinions of entry-level workers in four states: Idaho, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. For purposes of this study, entry-level workers were defined as full- and part-time workers in jobs that require no more than a high school education. Thus, some of the workers surveyed may have had previous experience or education beyond high school, but if the job they held did not demand it, they meet our definition.

Audience for the Study

This present study is intended to inform policymakers, business and labor leaders, educators, and those responsible for preparing the existing and future workforce about the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of today's entry-level workers based on information provided directly by these workers. Those concerned with high performance workplaces and high performance educational systems will want to review these findings and consider their implications for workplace

improvements and for educational restructuring of the curriculum and delivery system especially at the secondary and postsecondary level. The data might also be used as a benchmark from which to measure changes in future years.

In addition to the groups mentioned above, this report will be of interest at the local and state levels to those involved in business/community-education partnerships and those on newly formed state councils such as Oregon's Workforce Quality Council and the Washington's Workforce Training and Education Board.

PURPOSES AND RATIONALE

The entry-level worker survey was designed to collect worker opinion regarding five areas: (1) essential skills, attitudes and behaviors needed on the job by entry-level workers, (2) the purposes, content and delivery of training needed and desired by workers, (3) productivity, (4) workplace environment, and (5) employee benefits. Listed here is a brief review of these five areas and illustrative questions used in designing the survey.

1. Worker skills, attitudes and behaviors.

Issues

Employers in the 1989 NWREL study generated a set of skills, attitudes and behaviors they felt were essential for entry-level workers and indicated a perceived gap in the absence of these skills in many beginning workers. In *Building a Quality Workforce* (U.S. Department of Labor, 1988), it was found that educators tend to disagree with employers regarding the severity of basic skills deficiencies in their graduates. How do employees view the essential skills needed on the job and where do they see the gaps, if any, between skills needed and those generally possessed by entry-level workers. It could be argued that, if entry-level workers fail to see a skills gap, they will not be motivated to improve or seek training. Conversely, they may see skills they have as being underutilized or ignored on the job. If so, what are those skills?

Question Areas

- a. What do you see as important skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed by you and other entry-level workers?
- b. Which work skills, if any, do you have that are underutilized on the job?
- c. In school, what classes were most helpful in preparing you for your current job?
- d. When in school, what type of training would have better prepared you for your current job?

2. Training

Issues

At least several training issues exist that govern the purposes, content, and delivery of workplace training. Although the most obvious purpose of workplace training is to prepare employees to carry out job assignments, our 1989 study revealed other purposes such as preparation for more advanced positions, forming a well-rounded person, and motivating employees to remain in the company. To what extent do employees value these training opportunities? Why is it that many employees fail to take advantage of these training opportunities?

While on-the-job training related to performance of job tasks was common, a number of cases existed where seminars were available to employees on general topics such as health, stress reduction, and personal finance. Policies also varied across companies regarding company reimbursement for college classes taken by employees. Criteria used involved perceived relevance of the course to the person's job demands and grades obtained in the course. Less common training strategies involved giving employees released-time to tutor minority at-risk students in order to help employees become more effective in communicating with people from diverse backgrounds. The worker interviews should help identify the extent to which various types of employees value certain training opportunities, what they see as the purposes for training, and the extent to which they may be willing to help share the cost of training that is not related to their job performances.

Question Areas

- a. What types of training are available at work for you? Why have you chosen to participate or not participate?
- b. What motivated you to take the training you did?
- c. What obstacles exist to employees taking more training?
- d. What topics, if any, would you like to receive training in?
- e. Where did you learn the skills needed in your job?
- f. Do all those in a company have equal access to training?

3. Productivity

Issues

Employer interviews often revealed the perception that productivity was limited by lack of adequate basic skills and poor work attitudes. Do employees agree or disagree with these perceptions? What do employees see as key issues influencing productivity? What role does technology play? What are the perceived incentives and disincentives for increased productivity? A clearer understanding of how workers themselves view productivity issues is important for an eventual increase in productivity.

Question Areas

- a. What could be done to increase workplace productivity at your company?
- b. To what extent do you see inadequate basic skills or poor work attitudes in workers at your company?
- c. In what ways does the company try to improve productivity?

4. Workplace Environment

Issues

The workplace environment refers not only to the physical environment but the social and psychological environment shared by the workers. Our 1989 study revealed high effort by some employers in creating a caring environment where employees could feel important members of the work team. This was illustrated not only by involving employees in decisions about the company's operations and employee benefits, but in sponsoring parties, social events, and sporting activities to help employees feel pride in their company. From the perspective of entry-level employees, it is important to determine how they view the environment, the changes being created, and the level of their involvement in workplace decisions.

Much of the current research on stress in the workplace is traced to employees who feel they have little or no control over their environment. Is less stress experienced in companies where employees feel highly involved?

Question Areas

- a. What role, if any, do you have in helping decide the daily operations of your work environment?
- b. Does your company ask for your opinion on how things should be done? Do they encourage your suggestions on improving the workplace? Have you made suggestions? If so, what has happened regarding your suggestions?
- c. In what areas have you made recommendations to improve the workplace?
- d. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the workplace environment?

5. Employee Benefits

Issues

Many companies recognize the importance of motivating and rewarding successful employees as well as the need to have an employee benefits package that attracts and retains good employees. The nature of the benefits offered has changed in recent years to include not only the worker, but his or her family. For example, many companies are currently considering child care or

dependent care benefits, parental leave, and flexible hours to accommodate working mothers. A growing openness exists to consider a flexible benefits package in which each employee can select from a list of benefits those that are most appropriate for his or her situation. Public policy is also addressing dependent care issues since they often affect the availability of mothers to hold a job while maintaining a family. It becomes increasingly important for companies as well as public policy makers to have a better idea of what workers themselves think about existing benefits and benefits under consideration by some employers.

Question Areas

- a. How many workers are involved in elder care assistance?
- b. How many workers have dependent children for whom they are the primary providers?
- c. What are the employee benefits that your company offers? Which of these do you consider most important to you? What are of little interest to you?
- d. Which benefits not now offered would be important to you?
- e. Would you like to have a choice in selecting from a list of employee benefits or would you rather have management decide on a good package for all employees? Why?

METHODOLOGY

The statewide worker surveys were conducted jointly by NWREL and the Northwest Policy Center with agencies within each state. In Washington, the study was cosponsored by the Washington Employment Security Department and the State Board for Vocational Education; in Hawaii, by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; in Oregon, by the Employment Division of the Department of Human Resources; and in Idaho by the Research and Analysis branch of the Idaho Department of Employment, the Division of Vocational Education, and the Idaho State Council on Vocational Education.

In Hawaii, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), drew a stratified random sample of 221 companies and 1,713 workers. This sample was stratified by small, medium, and large firms on Oahu, and on the combined neighboring islands. The survey was completed by 595 workers from 122 companies.

In Idaho, the Research and Analysis branch of the Idaho Department of Employment developed a random sample of 311 companies stratified by size of company and three geographic areas of the state. Of the 311 companies selected, responses were received from 626 workers from 111 companies.

In Oregon, the Employment Division drew a random sample of 300 companies stratified by size of company and geographic area (Metropolitan Portland and balance of state). Of the 300 companies selected, responses were received from 273 workers from 106 companies.

In Washington, the Labor Market and Economic Analysis branch of the Employment Security Department developed a random sample of 510 companies stratified by six sizes of companies in seven geographic areas of the state. Of the 510 companies selected, responses were received from 363 of the 3,275 workers surveyed. This represented approximately 129 companies.

The cosponsors conducted the sampling, mailed and collected the surveys, then sent them to NWREL for coding, data entry and analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Table 1 shows the number of workers and companies sampled as well as the number completing and returning the survey. The overall number of worker surveys completed was 1,857 which represented a return rate of 20 percent. The number of companies sampled was 1,342 with 468 responding which represented a return rate of 29 percent.

Table 1
Number of Workers and Companies Sampled and Responding

	<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>Idaho</u>	<u>Oregon</u>	<u>Washington</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of workers sampled	1,713	1,910	2,430	3,275	9,328
Number of companies sampled	221	311	300	510	1,342
Number of workers responding	595	626	273	363	1,857
Number of companies responding	122	111	106	129	468

Population Description

Based on a review of the purposes and rationale for this study, a pilot set of questions was prepared and used with workers in a Seattle company. Some of the workers were administered the questions as an interview, and others through a written format. Respondents were asked to comment on the questions, suggest clarification, identify any they considered inappropriate, and suggest related items. As a result of this pilot test, a revised written survey was prepared. This draft was critiqued by staff at NPC and NWREL as well as by some employers and labor union leaders. Based on their comments, the survey was revised and shortened.

In order to make the survey more appealing, we substituted the name of the state for the generic term "Northwest" and omitted in the title "entry-level." Thus, the surveys had titles such as "Washington Worker Survey." When surveys were returned by the cooperating agencies to NWREL, they were coded for the workers' job titles using the DOL five digit code. The open-ended question regarding what changes they would recommend to improve the workplace was also coded. Data were then entered into a computer file, which was verified and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software.

STUDY FINDINGS

Study Population Description

This section describes the characteristics of the workers surveyed based on data from the survey. Table 2 shows some basic demographic differences across the four states. As can be seen in Table 2, there were more women than men reporting in each of the states. Ethnic differences across the states were accounted for primarily by Hawaii, where 44 percent identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islanders. In terms of highest education level, Washington stands out with 42 percent of their respondents indicating some form of postsecondary training. Wages were higher in Hawaii and Washington which may reflect the higher cost of living, and an increased number of union positions involved. Table 3 shows the types of jobs held by at least three percent of the respondents.

Of the 1,857 workers surveyed, 61 percent were female. The largest percentage of workers (65 percent) identified themselves as White, 17 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, two percent Hispanic, two percent Native American, and one percent or less Asian and Black. Sixty percent were between 25 and 44 years of age, with 10 percent under 21. Table 4 shows the distribution of workers by age.

About half of the workers were married, and the workers averaged 3.5 people in their households. The majority of workers completed high school and 26 percent had some form of postsecondary training, although at least 10 percent had not completed high school. Eighty-nine percent of the employees held a job before working at their present companies. The most frequent reason for leaving their prior jobs was to earn more money. Sixty-two percent of the workers earned between \$3.85 and \$7.99 in their prior jobs with 24 percent earning \$8.00 or more per hour. Workers averaged 2 to 5 years at their present jobs, and 62 percent earned between \$3.85 and \$7.99 per hour, and 36 percent now earn \$8.00 or more per hour.

The workers average 38.5 hours per week. Of those working less than 35 hours per week, 56 percent would like to work more hours. Fifteen percent of the workers reported working also at other jobs which average 18 hours per week. Of that number, 70 percent do the same or closely related types of work as at their primary jobs. Twenty-two percent of the workers surveyed are union members.

Although 20 percent of the workers have no idea what they will be doing three years from now, 22 percent anticipate they will be going to school, 29 percent anticipate doing the same jobs as now, 6 percent don't plan to be working, 18 percent expect to have different jobs at their present companies, and only 4 percent will be doing the same type of work as now but at another company. This last figure suggests a relatively low percent of workers dissatisfied with their present companies.

Table 2
Differences in Demographics Across the Four States
Figures Given in Percentages

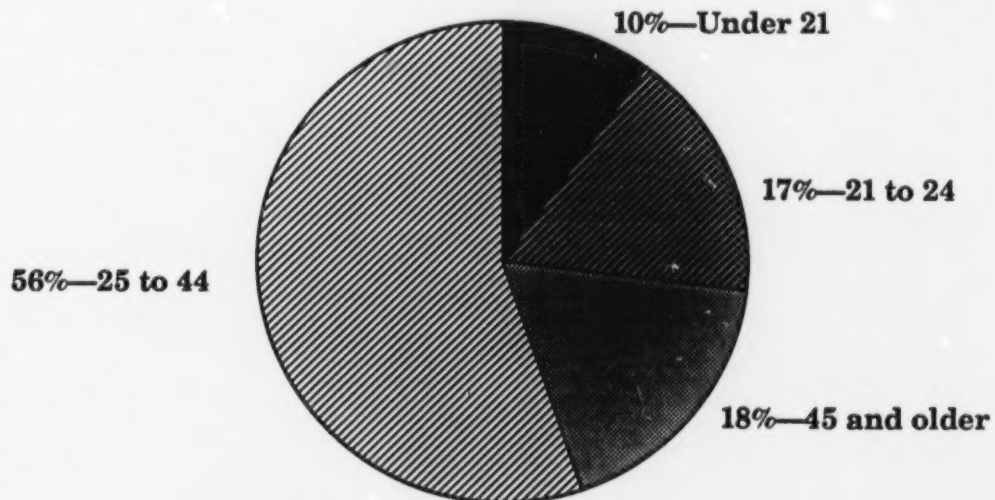
	<u>Hawaii</u>	<u>Idaho</u>	<u>Oregon</u>	<u>Washington</u>	<u>Combined</u>
Gender of Respondents					
Male	37	45	38	35	39
Female	63	55	62	65	61
Race/Ethnic					
Black	1	1	0	4	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	44	1	1	5	17
Hispanic	4	5	2	1	2
Native American	3	2	7	4	3
White	21	90	90	85	65
Other	27	1	0	1	12
Age					
Under 21	9	10	12	9	10
21-24	19	13	14	21	17
25-44	50	60	55	57	56
45 and over	21	17	19	15	18
Education Level					
Less than 12th grade	11	14	5	10	10
High school graduate	23	29	33	28	28
Some postsecondary	24	22	27	42	26
Current Hourly Wages					
Less than \$5.00*	4	8	14	0	0
\$5.00* - \$7.99	50	64	66	41	54
\$8.00 or more	46	28	21	51	36
Union membership	44	5	24	16	22

*\$4.25 was used as the cut in Hawaii and Idaho

Table 3
Distribution of Workers by Job Title

<u>Title</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Cashier	115	6.2
General Office Clerk	76	4.1
Laborer	66	3.6
Bookkeeper	57	3.1
Secretary	56	3.0
Retail Salesperson	49	2.6
Farm Worker	43	2.3
Waiter/Waitress	41	2.2
Receptionist	41	2.2
Food Preparation Worker	37	2.0

Table 4
Distribution of Workers by Age Level



Workplace Skills

Workers were asked to rate the importance of certain work skills and attitudes commonly considered by employers to be important. The areas rated most important are shown in Table 5. Regular attendance and following directions were rated highest. Both of these were rated as very important by 90 percent or more of the workers. Understanding of computers and keyboarding skills were rated much lower in importance (30 and 24 percent respectively). Over 80 percent felt their skills were used in their present jobs. The most common examples of unused skills were technical and computer skills.

Table 5
Job Skills or Attitudes Considered Very
Important by 75 Percent or More Workers

<u>Skills or Attitudes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Regular attendance	94
Following directions	93
Communicating with others	91
Working as a team member	89
Completing tasks on time	86
Willingness to learn new things	85
Handling a variety of work tasks	80

Workplace Environment

Workers also described the workplace environment. In terms of 26 characteristics of the workplace, workers agreed most strongly that they liked working at their present jobs, learned from their co-workers, had supervisors who treat them fairly, and communicated well with their supervisors. Statements agreed or strongly agreed with by three quarters or more employees are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Statements with Which 75 Percent
or More of the Workers Agreed

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I like working here	91
My supervisor treats me fairly	87
My supervisor and I communicate well	85
I learn from my co-workers	79
I can accomplish something worthwhile here	78
My co-workers' reading ability is enough for the job	77

Most of the workers did not report being bothered by stress at work or having difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities.

Although Table 6 indicates a number of aspects of the workplace perceived positively by the workers, it is equally important to note areas of concern. Table 7 identifies statements expressed as concerns by at least 15 percent of the workers. The top three concerns center on perceived problems in salaries and financial rewards.

Table 7
Most Frequently Expressed Concerns Regarding the Workplace

<u>Concern</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Salary increases are not based on how well you do your job	35
Rewards (such as promotions and salary increases) are not given fairly	32
Lack of opportunity to advance within the company	22
Not paid fairly for the work done	20
Workers lack a positive attitude	19
Lack of good company training	17
My shift or hours frequently conflict with my personal or family needs	17
Not all employees have equal opportunities for training	15

When asked where the workers learned the skills needed in their jobs, 89 percent indicated they learned needed skills on the job, although 38 percent added that they also learned the skills in high school. While in high school, the employees reported that classes they had taken in math (35 percent), vocational areas (12 percent), English (5 percent), and computers (3 percent), were most helpful in preparing them for their current jobs. While in school, additional training in computers (10 percent), vocational classes (11 percent), math (6 percent), and humanities (2 percent) would have been helpful.

Training

Seventy-eight percent of the workers wanted more training, especially in computer skills, communications, problem solving, teamwork skills, and task-specific skills.

While at their present job, the most frequent training reported by workers was on-the-job training (77 percent), safety and health (44 percent), and training to work as part of a team (36 percent). Fourteen percent reported that employers paid for courses outside of the company, such as college classes. Workers found out about company-sponsored training opportunities primarily from their supervisors, written publications, and co-workers. Eighteen percent checked that they hadn't heard about training opportunities, however. Only 11 percent knew about the training opportunities before being hired and thus, in most cases, these did not appear to be used as a recruiting attraction. The decision not to participate more in training opportunities was due largely to scheduled time of the training, the worker's own lack of interest, lack of child care, or other family conflicts. The most frequently identified types of additional training desired were college classes and training for better jobs at their companies. Table 8 describes the types of training workers desired.

Table 8
Training Workers Desired

<u>Type</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Training for better jobs in the company	43
Employer-paid courses outside the company (such as college classes)	40
On-the-job training	27
Training to work as part of a team	19
Personal development (such as personal finance)	17
Safety and health training	16
Basic skills development (such as reading and math skills)	9

Workplace Improvements

Employees were asked in an open-ended question what could be done to improve their workplaces. The most frequent responses are shown in Table 9. The only responses reported by 10 percent or more of the workers were to change the management style and to improve the physical environment.

Table 9
Recommendations for Workforce Improvement

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Physical plant improvements	11
Change management style and communications	10
Improve worker incentives/benefits	3
Technical changes	3

Seventy-seven percent of the workers reported making recommendations about their work environment, especially regarding ways of doing their job, the tasks to be performed, and work schedule. The employees felt their recommendations were taken seriously. A breakout of areas of recommendations is shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Areas of Worker Recommendations

<u>Area</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Ways of doing the job	59
Tasks performed	37
Work schedule	26
Company policies and practices	20
Number of hours worked	15
Employee benefits	8

Worker Benefits

A third of the workers reported providing assistance to an older or disabled adult either at home or elsewhere. This was most frequently done weekly and was seldom felt to affect their work lives. Forty percent of the workers have dependent children for whom they are the primary providers. Fifteen percent of the workers reported they sometimes had to take time off from work because of their children.

Workers in the Northwest rated a number of existing or possible employee benefits. Table 11 shows the benefits considered most important to the entry-level workers. As in other studies, medical and dental benefits and paid vacation/sick leave were of key importance. Although payment of child care costs was provided for only three percent of the workers, it was considered very important by 13 percent who would like to receive it.

Table 11
Most Important Benefits Identified by Workers

<u>Benefit</u>	<u>Percent</u>		
	<u>Those Receiving</u>	<u>Most Important</u>	<u>Most Important</u>
	<u>The Benefit</u>	<u>for People Now</u>	<u>for People Not</u>
<u>Now</u>		<u>Receiving Them</u>	<u>Receiving Them</u>
Medical benefits for you	74	55	16
Medical benefits for your dependents	49	35	19
Dental benefits for you	63	42	19
Dental benefits for your dependents	41	26	22
Paid vacation/sick leave	71	41	15
Employer paid retirement benefits	39	20	21
Flexible work schedule	34	17	17
Options to select from a set of benefits	16	6	13
Unpaid leave to care for a sick child, spouse or parent	20	6	11
Full or partial payment of child care costs	3	1	13

Over forty percent of the workers learned about their employee benefits at their companies through employee handbooks or heard about them at orientations. Table 12 shows the most frequent sources of information about employee benefits.

Table 12
Sources of Information About Employee Benefits

<u>Source</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Employee handbook	48
Heard about them at orientation	41
Told by my supervisor	26
Heard from co-workers	25
Knew about them before I was hired	24
Memos, newsletters, or bulletins	22
Heard from my union	8

SUMMARY

The findings reported here are organized around the five focal areas of the study: (1) skills, attitudes and behaviors needed by entry-level workers, (2) training, (3) productivity, (4) workplace environment, and (5) employee benefits.

1. Worker Skills, Attitudes, and Behaviors

Findings from this study indicate that entry-level workers tend to agree with employers on the important skills and attitudes needed in the workplace--regular attendance, following directions, communications, teamwork, completing tasks on time, and willingness to learn new things. While reading, writing, and math skills were seen as important in their jobs by approximately 90 percent of the workers, they were seen as already being performed adequately by most of those surveyed. A significant problem in the workplace is the use of drugs and alcohol on the job. While 57 percent felt their co-workers never use them, 30 percent disagreed. Given the safety risks involved with the use of drugs on the job, it would appear important to provide more worker training and stricter enforcement policies.

Workers were also asked how often good use was made of their skills and abilities on the job. While 53 percent indicated almost always, 17 percent indicated never, seldom, or only sometimes. This suggests that more attention be given by employers and unions to skills that workers possess that are being ignored or under-utilized on the job. As American companies move toward the creation of high performance workplaces, it will become even more important to identify worker skills and attempt to use them more fully whenever possible.

2. Training

Contrary to the attitude of some employers that entry-level workers are not interested in training, this study found 78 percent of the workers indicating a desire for more training, especially in

computer skills, communications, problem solving, teamwork, and task-specific skills. Presently, 77 percent of workers received on-the-job training, 44 safety and health training, and 36 percent teamwork training.

While 40 percent of the workers desired employer-paid courses outside the company (such as college classes), only 14 percent were actually receiving them. The most frequent purpose for seeking training was to obtain better jobs within the company. Eighteen percent of the workers indicated they were unaware of training opportunities in their companies. This may indicate that the opportunities do not exist or that they are not well advertised to the workers. The decision by workers not to participate more in training opportunities was due largely to schedule conflicts, the worker's lack of interest, and to a lesser extent, to lack of child care or other family conflicts. Seventeen percent of the workers surveyed felt their companies did not provide good training, and 15 percent felt equal opportunities were not available to all for training.

To achieve a world class workforce, U.S. employers will need to provide training opportunities to all workers, not just to those in management and professional positions.

Familiarity with the areas in which workers desire more training will be useful to community colleges or other groups gearing up to provide training to existing and future members of the workforce.

3. Productivity

Slightly over three-quarters of the workers reported having made suggestions to improve the workplace. Recommendations were made especially in relation to ways of doing the job, tasks performed, work schedule, and company policies and practices. Workers felt the amount or quality of the work done in companies could be improved by changing the management style, improving worker incentives, providing more/better training, and hiring more or better workers. Thus, while management often feels productivity can be improved with new technology or training, the workers themselves are conscious of the effect of management style and incentives. From a policy perspective, it is important to recognize that each of these components is important and that it would be unwise to place reliance for improved productivity on a single component. As is true with the characteristics of high performance workplaces, it is a combination of all of these factors which creates high performance.

4. Workplace Environment

Eighty-five percent or more of the workers agreed to the following workplace environment statements: "I like working here," "my supervisor treats me fairly," and "my supervisor and I communicate well," and at least three-quarters of the workers also agreed that they learn from their co-workers and that they can accomplish something worthwhile at their company. Most of the workers reported that they were not bothered by stress at work and had little difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities. Thus, most workers liked their current company. Nevertheless, some significant concerns were voiced. A third felt salary increases were not based on how well you do your job and that rewards were not distributed fairly. At least one out of five felt they were not paid fairly and that they lack opportunities to advance within the company.

The percentage of workers reporting that they liked their current jobs seemed surprisingly high. Nevertheless, a number felt their pay was inadequate or was not being distributed fairly.

America's Choice laid it squarely in the open with the choice needed to be made by our country as to whether we want Americans to have high skills or low wages. To assume that companies can have both is a mistake and yet the *America's Choice* study found only about five percent of the companies expressing a willingness to pay for the skills they desire.

5. Worker Benefits

Many entry-level workers are operating without benefits. Over a quarter of the workers lack medical benefits or paid sick leave. Less than one quarter have unpaid leave to care for a sick child, spouse, or parent, and only three percent had full or partial payment of child care costs. Options to select from a set of benefits were available to only 16 percent of the workers. Medical, dental, and paid sick leave were the three most important benefits in the opinion of these workers.

Legislators, employers, and unions are already pursuing child care and dependent care leave and benefits. Other areas that will warrant more attention, especially with two income families, include allowing employers to select options among the multiple benefits available that best meet an individual workers' circumstances.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Until recently, education and training and workplace practices have been viewed as someone else's problem: basic skills and training were the school's problem, children were their parents' problems, workplace policies were business' problem or labor's problem. Now, policy makers recognize that the solutions to education, social welfare and economic development problems are interwoven. Our ability to have an educated workforce, to protect children from poverty, to maintain or raise our quality of life and standard of living, and to increase productivity rely in part on this recognition that success in social, educational and economic arenas are critical to each other. The attention paid to public education, to youth at-risk and to children in poverty affect the quality of our future workforce and our ability to compete in the world marketplace. State leaders reflect the new thinking that:

- investment in education and training is an economic development strategy as critical as job creation or retention strategies
- the new welfare programs designed to move clients successfully into the world of work depend on a workplace that accommodates the needs of families;
- those preparing youth and adults for the world of work need to stay attuned to the changing needs of employers and of the workplace.

Education, training, skill upgrading and family policies serve as a bridge between our educational, social and economic development goals. They can enable workers to participate in the workforce and to work more productively. The same policies that protect children by encouraging available

quality care for children allow welfare recipients to join in the workforce. The policies that encourage innovative business-education partnerships also provide special training and work experiences that are of particular significance for workers whose attachment to the workforce is marginal and who are at-risk of failing to succeed in the workplace. This includes workers who drop in and out of employment due to lack of work skills, limited educational background, learning or physical handicaps or because of conflict with family responsibilities. Many of these workers, in what we have defined as entry-level positions, i.e., those requiring no more than a high school education, find that workplace policies and practices are the key to their success in remaining employed, to developing their skills and marketability, and to managing successfully work and family responsibilities.

What role does public policy play in providing these programs and benefits? In the Northwest, there have been several efforts at the public policy level. The 1991 *Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century* addresses educational innovations and sets benchmarks for educational achievement. It restricts employment to those who have met certain educational standards. In Washington, the 1990 "Investment in Human Capital" legislation addresses new roles for the state in training and establishes the Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Oregon's Parental Leave Act and Washington's welfare reform plan also impact entry-level workers. Other practices we've identified through our earlier employer interviews are affected by public policies and incentives such as on-site or release time English as a Second Language or GED classes sponsored by Employment Service training grants. However, most workplace practices are left up to the marketplace. An important task for public policy makers is to determine the right mix—what is the role of government mandate, of public incentives, and when are practices best left up to the private sector.

Understanding implications of the changing workforce/workplace and of the current economic restructuring are critical to any discussion of workplace policy; the particular task of this report is to consider the special impact of these changes on the entry-level population. How can our education and worker preparation systems and our social policies reflect these changes and meet the needs of entry-level workers? The 58 interviews conducted with employers in six states identified problems employers are facing and how they are dealing with them. The Northwest Worker Survey completed by over 1,800 employees in four states provides a critical perspective from the worker's viewpoint.

Education and Worker Preparation

Our findings show that employers are experiencing the effects of a tighter labor market and many are competing to recruit entry-level workers with good work habits. Some offer training opportunities to attract workers or to provide advancement opportunities.

Employers interviewed clearly indicated that the changing nature of work demands a new set of skills, sometimes called the "new basics." These include adaptability, flexibility, problem solving and teamwork skills. The "old basics," reading, writing, communicating and computing are still critical. And workplace readiness, i.e., punctuality, attendance, appropriate dress, reliability, is still of prime importance to employers. Interestingly, entry-level workers surveyed agreed; over 75 percent rated a range of work ethics and new basic skills as "very important."

Educators, labor, and management must find new and better ways to work together to ensure a work-ready workforce. With a significant nonwork-ready population, we must find new ways to address

this community and national problem. Policy makers will continue to investigate and adapt strategies used by other countries and to innovate at home. Many are interested in the new "Oregon model" which plans to implement many of the recommendations from the highly acclaimed report, *America's Choice*.

Employer-Based Training

Entry-level workers sent a clear signal that they desire additional training, (78 percent of those surveyed said they would like more training). In the past company-sponsored training has generally been reserved for those in professional and managerial positions. High performance workplaces have learned that training needs to reach front-line positions, and that most employees at all levels are eager to improve their knowledge and skills and desire advancement opportunities.

Existing training programs sponsored by employers and/or labor must be examined. An employer's legitimate concern in subsidizing employee education programs is to benefit the company. Although some employers do sponsor GED programs, workplace literacy, or even a basic liberal arts education, many others sponsor only classes that are occupation and company-specific. Education is for the whole person and teaches life skills; often on the job training is only for a specific job. Employees may receive substantial training yet find themselves without transferable skills, or with in-house certification that is not recognized even in the same industry.

Public policies can provide networks and clearinghouses that foster a continual information exchange among educators, labor, and employers to share best practices for workplace training. The U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau offers employees access to a national data base on implementing child care and elder care services through its CHOICES program. Government agencies can promote, implement, and/or fund this type of data base or other clearinghouse activities in areas relating to company-sponsored training. Public/private partnerships have designed successful models and must continue to find new solutions for our limited English, disadvantaged minority, and educationally disadvantaged citizens to allow them to fully participate in the workforce. Educators and the private sector still have much to learn from each other in terms of strategies and techniques for special populations. Some exciting new programs based on the old apprenticeship model are being used by innovative employers. The Department of Labor in cooperation with the AFL-CIO has sponsored joint labor management demonstration projects at four Northwest sites that provide workers with classroom and on-the-job training, and provide a living wage at the same time. This type of opportunity is especially important to entry-level workers who would not otherwise be able to afford or have access to career upgrade opportunities.

Benefits and Dependent Care

Who is responsible for providing entry-level workers with health care coverage, child care assistance and other benefits? Health care coverage and costs have been one of the most examined issues in the public policy area. Entry-level workers many of whom are without coverage because of factors such as part-time employment and who are less likely to be able to afford a health care problem are at great risk.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory employer survey (Owens, Lindner and Cohen 1989), found a high employer awareness of work and family issues. Many cited specific examples of losing women employees because of work/family conflict. At the same time, many employers are unaware of the range of stresses and responsibilities or of appropriate workplace responses. The most recent Conference Board Report shows that out of 6 million employers in our country, only 3,300 have developed child care programs and policies. Although few employers who we interviewed have a child care assistance program, we did find examples of nearly every strategy identified in the literature (mostly concentrated in a few companies): onsite child care, subsidies, information and referral, brown bag lunches on parenting topics, flexible work hours, and part-time options. Most employers said they were aware of the need for some type of child care assistance, or were "looking into it," or anticipated that it would be offered as a benefit in the future. Our worker survey indicated almost no child care assistance or benefits were available to entry-level workers except unpaid leave available to 20 percent of our population. Complex policy questions on work and family benefits and entry-level workers remain.

To what extent do these benefits assist entry-level employees? With the median income of these workers in the \$5.00-\$8.00 an hour level, how viable are options such as part-time work, or non-subsidized onsite child care? Non-subsidized onsite child care in the Seattle area costs an employee over \$500/month for one child, far beyond the reaches of most entry level workers.

What is the role of public policy in making available affordable child care and in requiring businesses to accommodate family needs? Some advocate targeting resources to special populations for example, subsidizing child care for single mothers moving out of welfare dependency. Some argue that the lack of a national family policy with legislation such as parental leave that uniformly cover all workers has become a costly burden to us as a society. In these areas, the role of public/private partnerships, is critical to providing the training, lifelong learning and social supports needed by all workers.

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APPENDIX A

Northwest Entry-Level Worker Survey Tabulation

(N = 1,857 Workers)

Company Name Hawaii 595, Idaho 626, Oregon 273, Washington 363

1. What kind of work do you do? _____
2. What is your job title? _____

The following questions relate to your work at this company.

3. We would like your opinion about your job. For each skill or attitude please indicate how important you feel it is in doing your job. Circle V if it is Very Important, S if it is Somewhat Important, or N if it is Not Very Important.

	V	S	N
Solving problems	72	24	5
Regular attendance	94	6	0
Working as a team member	89	10	1
Communicating with others	97	8	1
Willingness to learn new things	85	14	1
Handling a variety of work tasks	80	19	1
Keyboarding skills for a computer	30	32	39
Understanding of computers	24	38	38
Reading skills	65	29	6
Writing skills	55	36	10
Math skills	51	37	12
Following directions	93	7	0
Completing tasks on time	86	13	1

4. How often is good use made of your skills and abilities in your job? (Check one)

53 Almost always 31 Usually 12 Sometimes 4 Seldom 1 Never

If seldom or never, what skills are not being used?

Computer 1.6%, Technical 1.4%, Problem solving 1%, Interpersonal 1%

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(Over)

5. Would you like more training? 78 Yes 22 No

If YES, what skills do you think you need to improve? (Check all that apply)

<u>6</u> Reading	<u>16</u> Team work skills
<u>12</u> Math	<u>25</u> Task-specific skills
<u>25</u> Communications	<u>22</u> Solving problems
<u>42</u> Computer skills	<u>11</u> Other (specify) _____

6. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Circle SA for Strongly Agree, A for Agree, U for Undecided, D for Disagree, and SD for Strongly Disagree.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a. I like working here.	45	46	6	2	1
b. I have opportunities to advance within this company.	21	36	22	15	7
c. All those in my company have equal opportunities for training for advancement.	27	41	17	11	4
d. My company provides good training.	21	45	17	13	4
e. I learn from my co-workers.	30	49	11	8	3
f. I have a chance to accomplish something worthwhile here.	33	45	15	6	2
g. My supervisor and I communicate well.	42	43	9	4	2
h. My supervisor treats me fairly.	46	41	8	4	1
i. My supervisor asks for my ideas and suggestions to improve things at work.	30	39	15	12	4
j. My supervisor lets me change my work hours if needed to meet my family needs.	35	38	12	9	6
k. My work group is well organized.	19	50	19	11	2
l. My co-workers' math ability is enough for the job.	18	56	20	5	1
m. My co-workers' reading ability is enough for the job.	23	54	16	6	2
n. The people I work with cooperate as a team.	23	45	15	14	4
o. Workers here have a positive attitude about work and use their worktime well.	19	45	18	14	5
p. Workers here have good attendance and are on time.	22	44	17	11	5
q. Management has a good attitude toward workers.	26	43	17	11	4
r. Our equipment and supplies are of high quality.	32	38	17	11	3
s. My co-workers never use drugs and alcohol on the job.	37	20	13	18	12
t. My shift or hours frequently conflict with my personal or family needs.	5	12	9	44	30

Please circle SA for Strongly Agree, A for Agree, U for Undecided, D for Disagree, and SD for Strongly Disagree.

u.	It is hard for me to balance work and family responsibilities.	4	12	12	48	24
v.	Stress at work is reducing the quality of my work.	4	15	15	43	23
w.	Stress at work is reducing the quality of personal and family life.	7	19	21	34	20
x.	Rewards (such as promotions, and salary increases) are given fairly here.	14	29	24	19	13
y.	Salary increases are based on how well you do your job.	14	31	21	20	15
z.	I am paid fairly for the work I do.	19	44	18	12	8

7. Where did you learn the skills needed in your job? (Check all that apply)

<u>89</u>	On the job	<u>13</u>	Community college
<u>38</u>	High school	<u>13</u>	College or university
<u>6</u>	Apprenticeship	<u>13</u>	Job training program
<u>16</u>	Other (please specify) _____		

8. In school, what classes (such as math, auto mechanics, or marketing) were most helpful in preparing you for your current job?

35%	Math	English	5%
12%	Vocational Area	Computer	3%

9. When in school, what type of training would have better prepared you for your current job?

11%	Vocational Areas
10%	Computers
6%	Math
2%	Humanities

10. What types of training have you participated in at your company? (Check all that apply)

<u>77</u>	On-the-job training (OJT)
<u>9</u>	Basic skill development (for example, reading and math skills)
<u>44</u>	Safety and health training
<u>7</u>	Personal development training (such as personal finance)
<u>36</u>	Training to work as part of a team
<u>17</u>	Training for better jobs in this company
<u>14</u>	Employer-paid courses outside of the company (such as college classes)
<u>10</u>	Other (specify) _____
<u>10</u>	My company doesn't offer training opportunities
_____	None

(Over)

11. How did you find out about these company-sponsored training opportunities? (Check one or more)

- 11 Knew about them before I was hired
- 15 Heard about them at orientation
- 34 Told by my supervisor
- 22 Heard from co-workers
- 15 Employee handbook
- 25 Memos, newsletters, or bulletins
- 2 Heard from my union
- 18 I haven't heard about these training opportunities
- 64 Other (Please specify) _____

12. If you have not taken advantage of training opportunities at your company, why?

- 5 Not interested
- 8 Offered at a bad time
- 2 Transportation problems
- 5 Child care or other family conflict
- 3 Don't feel it would help me
- 20 Other (please specify) _____

13. What types of training would you like to have more of? (Check all that apply)

- 27 On-the-job training
- 9 Basic skill development (for example, reading and math skills)
- 16 Safety and health training
- 17 Personal development areas (such as personal finance)
- 19 Training to work as part of a team
- 43 Training for better jobs in this company
- 40 Employer-paid courses taken outside of the company (such as college classes)
- 6 Other (specify) _____
- 8 None

14. What could be done in your company to increase either the amount or the quality of the work done?

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 15% | Change management style | 4% | Technical changes |
| 10% | Improve worker incentives | 2% | Increase quality review |
| 6% | More/better training | 2% | Change personnel |
| 5% | Hire more/better workers | | |

15. Do you make recommendations about your work environment, for example, the work you do and how you do it?

77% Yes 23% No

a. If YES, in which of the following areas?

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| <u>26</u> | Work schedule | <u>37</u> | Tasks performed |
| <u>15</u> | Number of hours worked | <u>8</u> | Employee benefits package |
| <u>59</u> | Ways of doing the job | <u>21</u> | Other (Specify) _____ |
| <u>20</u> | Company policies and practices | | |

b. If YES, are your recommendations taken seriously? 79% Yes 21% No

16. What changes would you recommend to improve your workplace?

- 11% Physical changes
- 10% Change management style
- 3% Technical changes
- 3% Improve worker incentives

17. a. Do you provide any care or assistance to an older person or a disabled adult? (This includes persons who live with you or somewhere else. Assistance can include shopping, home maintenance, transportation, or checking on them by phone.)

33% Yes 67% No

b. If YES, how often? [Of those 30 responding]

37 Daily 20 Once or twice a month
39 Weekly 4 Less than once a month

c. If YES, how does this affect your work life? (Check one or more)

25 It doesn't
4 I sometimes have to take time off from work
2 I'm sometimes less effective at work
3 Other (Please specify) _____

18. a. Do you have dependent children for whom you are the primary provider?

40% Yes 60% No

b. If YES, how does this affect your work life? (Check one or more)

21 It doesn't
15 I sometimes have to take time off from work
4 I'm sometimes less effective at work
4 Other (Please specify) _____

19. Listed below are benefits that could be provided to employees. Few companies offer all of these benefits. Use the left hand column to place a check (✓) beside those benefits you receive. On the right hand side, put a check (✓) next to the 5 benefits that would be most important to you regardless of whether you receive them or not.

	Benefits You Actually Receive	Received and 5 Most Important Benefits to You	Not Received But Important
Medical benefits for you	74	55	16
Medical benefits for your dependents	49	35	19
Dental benefits for you	63	42	22
Dental benefits for your dependents	41	26	19
Unpaid leave to care for a new baby	18	4	6
Unpaid leave to care for a sick child, spouse, or parent	20	6	11
Child care at or near work	3	1	10
Full or partial payment of child care costs	3	1	13
Help in finding child care	1	0	5
Other child care assistance	1	0	5
A flexible work schedule	34	17	17

(Over)
30

	Benefit You Actually Receive	Received and 3 Most Important Benefits to You	Not Received But Important
Options to select from a set of benefits other than health care/life insurance	16	6	13
Workshops related to personal and family needs	7	2	7
Employer paid retirement benefits	39	20	21
Paid vacation/sick leave	71	41	15
Others (Please list)	8	3	5

20. How did you learn about employee benefits in your company? (Check one or more)

<u>24</u> Knew about them before I was hired	<u>25</u> Heard from co-workers
<u>41</u> Heard about them at orientation	<u>48</u> Employee handbook
<u>22</u> Memos, newsletters, or bulletins	<u>8</u> Heard from my union
<u>26</u> Told by my supervisor	
<u>15</u> Other (specify) _____	

21. Your sex:

39 Male 61 Female

22. Your race (Check the category that best describes you):

<u>1</u> Black	<u>3</u> Native American
<u>17</u> Asian/Pacific Islander	<u>65</u> White
<u>2</u> Hispanic-origin	
<u>12</u> Other (Specify) _____	

23. How old are you?

<u>10</u> Under 21 years old	<u>17</u> 45 to 64 years old
<u>17</u> 21 to 24 years old	<u>1</u> 65 and over
<u>56</u> 25 to 44 years old	

24. a. What language do you mainly speak at home?

96 English 1 Spanish 3 Other (Which)

b. What language do you mainly speak at work?

99 English _____ Spanish 1 Other (Which) _____

25. Check which of the following best describes your living situation?

15 Live with parent(s)
8 Single parent
21 Single, living alone or with others
52 Married, spouse present
3 Other

26. How many people are in your household? 3.52 Mean (Number)

27. What is the highest level of education you completed? (Circle or check one)

Grade completed: eight 1, nine 2, ten 3, eleven 4, twelve 34

High school graduate 28

Vocational, trade, or business .. (less than 2 years)..... 14

school after high school (2 years or more) 5

(Less than 2 years of college) 3

(2 or more years of college) 3

College Program (Finished 4 or 5 year program) 1

(Education beyond a 4 or 5 year degree). _____

28. Have you held a paid job before working at this company? 89 Yes 11 No

29. a. If YES, why did you leave your last job? (Check all that apply.)

37 To earn more money

1 Child care problems

17 Personal, family, or school reasons

3 Transportation problems

3 Health problems

8 Slack work or business

3 Retirement

conditions

8 Temporary/seasonal job completed

8 Was laid off/fired

11 Unsatisfactory work schedule

4 Returned to school

4 Needed time to care for a new baby

23 Other (specify) _____

17 Bad working conditions

- b. What was your hourly rate of pay at your last job?

13 Less than \$3.85

18 \$8.00 to \$11.99

17 \$3.85 to \$4.99

4 \$12.00 to \$15.99

45 \$5.00 to \$7.99

23 \$16.00 or more

30. How long have you been in your present job? 5 years and 5 months

One or less 30%, two 18%, three 11%, four 5%, five to nine 18%, ten plus 18%

31. What is your current hourly rate of pay?

1 Less than \$3.85

29 \$8.00 to \$11.99

8 \$3.85 to \$4.99

5 \$12.00 to \$15.99

54 \$5.00 to \$7.99

2 \$16.00 or more

32. How long have you been at this rate of pay?

47 Under 6 months

30 6 months to almost 1 year

16 1 to almost 3 years

4 3 to 5 years

3 Over 5 years

33. Are you a member of a union? 22 Yes 78 No

34. How many hours a week do you generally work at this company? Mean 38.48, SD 9.77

35. a. If you are working less than 35 hours a week, would you like to work more hours?

56 Yes 44 No

(Over)

36. Do you also work at another job? 15 Yes 85 No

If YES, how many hours per week do you generally work at the other job(s)?

17.96 Mean.

37. What type(s) of work do you do there? _____

Same 59%, Closely related 10%, Different 30%

38. What do you plan to be doing three years from now? (Check one or more)

29 Same job as now

18 Different job at this company

4 Same type of work as now but at another company

6 I don't plan to be working

22 Going to school

20 I have no idea what I'll be doing

15 Other (specify) _____

39. Do you have comments you feel should be included in our study? If yes, write them here.

Thanks for taking time to complete this survey. Please put it in the attached envelope, seal it, and return it to your employer. It will be seen only by the research team at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland.